

Cardinal who praised cover-up bows out of DC Latin Mass

Thomas C. Fox | Apr. 21, 2010 NCR Today



The main celebrant of a pontifical solemn high Mass slated for Saturday

at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception has agreed to step aside from celebrating the mass following the objections of a growing chorus of sex abuse survivors and others, according to a [report by UPI.com](#) [1].

Cardinal Dario Castrillon Hoyos was named in French press reports last week for praising French Bishop Pierre Pican of Bayeux-Lisieux in a 2001 letter for refusing to denounce one of his priests, Fr. Rene Bissey, who went on to be sentenced to 18 years in jail for raping a boy and abusing 10 other young men.

UPI.com reports that according to a draft of a statement by the Bethesda-based Paulus Institute, Cardinal Castrillon Hoyos has agreed to step aside from celebrating the Mass, which has been in the planning for three years. It will be the first time in about 50 years that the Tridentine Mass, conducted in Latin, will be said from the Shrine's high altar.

Reportedly organizers now are searching for a bishop or cardinal who is proficient in how to celebrate the complicated rite.

The French cleric reportedly said he did not tell police about the perpetrator because he could not violate the confidentiality of the confessional. But according to news reports, the bishop also had been informed about the abuse outside the confessional by the mother of one of the victims.



"I congratulate you for not denouncing a priest to the civil administration," Cardinal Hoyos wrote in

French. "You have acted well and I am pleased to have a colleague in the episcopate who, in the eyes of history and of all other bishops in the world, preferred prison to denouncing his son and priest."

On Tuesday, a Catholic activist group, the Survivors Network of Those Abused by Priests (SNAP), called on Washington Archbishop Donald W. Wuerl to intervene to prevent the Mass and hinted it might demonstrate Saturday if its demands were not met.

Ken Wolfe, a spokesman for the Paulus Institute, said mounting security concerns and prominent news reports about the cardinal concerned Paulus Institute officials to the point that they decided it was best for Cardinal Hoyos, who was slated to fly to Washington from Rome, to step aside.

The UPI.com report states: "The Paulus Institute regards all sexual abuse as tragic and a heinous sin and supports Pope Benedict's fight to rid this disease from the Church," the draft read. "It stands on the side of every victim of clerical sexual abuse and earnestly desires to bind up the wounds done to their human dignity, to vindicate their civil and canonical rights, and to help them in the restoration in Christ of all they have lost. "To that end, the Paulus Institute supports the directives by the Supreme Roman Pontiff and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops that all bishops should report crimes of sexual abuse to the police in accordance with the requirements of civil law. However, the Paulus Institute is not competent, nor does it have the facts, to form an opinion about the recent media reports concerning Cardinal Castrillon."

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